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ABSTRACT

A study involving 169 graduate nursing students (4 males and 165 females) was conducted to assess the construct validity of the Adult Career Concerns Inventory (ACCI). The ACCI is designed to assess career concerns of adults of any age and occupation. Focused on the "planfulness" and exploration factors of the theoretical model of vocational maturity developed by D. E. Super et al. (1988), the 65-item Likert scale instrument assesses respondents' career exploration, establishment, maintenance, disengagement, and change. Respondents to the mailed questionnaire included 102 female and two male students, aged 23 to 62 years. Factor loadings were developed for ACCI items using principal axis factoring and both varimax and oblique rotations were applied to the initial factor matrix. This study provides an example of rationally defined scales giving more interpretable information than statistically defined scales. Two data tables are included. (TJH)

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# Factor Structure of the Adult Career Concerns Inventory

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**Factor Structure of the Adult Career Concerns Inventory**

Super changed the focus of career development from the matching of people and jobs to the study of a career development process (Super & Hall, 1978). The process of developing a career is an integral part of an individual's maturation process (Super, 1953; Super & Overstreet, 1960). As an individual matures, the development of career behaviors does not occur independently from the development of other behaviors appropriate to the age level (Barlett, 1971; Munley, 1975; Super & Overstreet, 1960). Vocational stages occur with their corresponding developmental tasks as do other developmental stages and tasks (Super, 1963). Vocational developmental tasks change with age, experiences, social vicissitudes, and physical and psychological changes (Super & Kidd, 1979).

According to Super, the process of developing a career involves encountering and resolving predictable vocational stages with their corresponding developmental tasks. Based on Buehler's life-span theory (1933) and Havighurst's developmental stage theory (1953), Super identified life stages of age-related vocational development, each with corresponding developmental tasks. The stages and a brief description of the substages follow (Super, Thompson & Lindemann, 1988, pp. 2-4).

Exploration Stage

Crystallization. Society expects individuals to develop ideas as to the field and level of work desired and of occupations that appeal to them, upon which educational training

and preoccupational decisions are based. These tasks are faced especially when at curricular choice points in school; when entering the labor market; and when displaced by economic change, illness or injury, or personal growth and change.

Specification. General preferences must become specific as there is pressure to act and to choose an occupation, a speciality, or a job. Specification is a concern especially among those in their early 20s and again during career transitions and midcareer crises.

Implementation. An objective having been chosen, plans must be made and carried out. Doing so is the task of the early 20s, of midcareer when the desire for greater self-realization causes career review, and of impending retirement when a different kind of review is called for.

Establishment Stage

Stabilizing. In this substage, the expectation that individuals will make and act on plans is followed by the expectation that they will settle down, support themselves and contribute to family support, develop an appropriate lifestyle, make use of abilities and training, and pursue meaningful interests. These pursuits are common among individuals in their late 20s and early 30s and again after midcareer changes.

Consolidating. After having settled down, individuals are commonly concerned with their places in occupations or in organizations. Security is the objective, although in unstable careers, it is elusive and sometimes not even desired.

Advancing. In middle-class and upper-middle-class circles, there is generally an expectation that individuals will

get ahead financially and move to more challenging levels of responsibility of what is sometimes called "behavior control" or independence. Not everyone wants advancement, but this goal is a common concern among those who are in white-collar occupations and who range in age from 25 to 45 or 50.

Maintenance Stage

Holding. Having attained a position, individuals are expected to hold onto it if not to improve it. Competition from others, technological changes, health problems, or family demands may threaten it. This concern is common after the age of 45.

Updating. In some fields of work and for some individuals, holding their own is not enough; it may be important to keep abreast of new developments as fields change and as individual goals change. These aims are tasks more than they are substages.

Innovating. In some fields, such as high technology, individuals are expected to break new ground. Some individuals continue to feel the need to explore and to establish, to do something different or at least to do it differently, even after they are well established. They are concerned with more than maintenance only.

Disengagement Stage

Decelerating. As individuals grow older, they eventually feel the need to reduce the pace or load of work and to taper off before retirement. This deceleration is common for individuals in their 60s and not uncommon for those in their late 50s, especially among those who have some control over their work

situations. Some begin to delegate part of their activities to younger persons and to become more selective in what they themselves do.

Retirement Planning. Planning for retirement is an active concern for individuals who are planful enough to anticipate retirement or who find that they are expected to retire. This developmental task is very clearly related to age and to stage.

Retirement Living. Giving up a job or work for pay brings with it the expectations associated with other roles that individuals continue to play in their home lives or as involved in hobbies, civic activities, and/or sometimes studies. Functioning as a person of leisure in a world of work brings new concerns. This stage is common for individuals in their late 60s and 70s and is related to age of mandatory or optional retirement.

Recycling/Career Change

It is increasingly common for individuals to change their major field of activity, whether in employment or homemaking, after having become established in one field. Such changes are accompanied by reassessment of life-career plans; by a reexploration of values, interests, and abilities; and by the seeking of what may be different opportunities and outlets (Super, Thompson, & Lindemann, 1988).

The preceding stages and developmental tasks descriptions initially served as the basis for the item writing of the Adult Career Concerns Inventory. The focus of this adult inventory was limited to measuring attitudes. These attitudes were defined and

the items written on the basis of "conceptually adequate career stage and substage definitions" (Super et al., 1988, p. 13). Items were rejected or retained depending upon their internal consistency and degree of independence (Super et al., 1988).

Reliability and validity studies have been conducted on the Adult Career Concerns Inventory (Halpin, Ralph, & Halpin, 1987; Mahoney, 1987). In addition, construct validity was demonstrated by Crom and Slocum (1986), Mahoney (1986), and Phillips (1987) using factor analysis. Crom and Slocum reported four factors extracted that corresponded to the four stage scores of the Adult Career Concerns Inventory and which explained 52% of the variance. Phillips also extracted four factors that explained 43.1% of the variance. Mahoney (1986) found three factors, with the establishment and maintenance stages merging. The purpose of this paper is to provide further evidence of the construct validity of the Adult Career Concerns Inventory by investigating the factor structure of this measure with graduate nursing students.

## Method

### Subjects

The population for this study was all the graduate nursing students ($N$ = 169) who had been accepted at the time of this study in the graduate nursing program at a university in the South. Four were males and 165 were females. Of the responding sample, 2 were males and 102 were females. They were from 23 to 62 years of age.

## Procedure

By mail all potential subjects were offered an opportunity to participate in the study. The letter sent included the purpose of the study, a description of what was expected of the respondents, the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality of the individuals who responded, and the places where and dates and times when the subjects could complete the Adult Career Concerns Inventory being administered in the study. Subjects agreeing to participate returned an enclosed postcard on which they indicated when they could come for testing.

Those who agreed to participate but who could not come at scheduled testing times were mailed the Adult Career Concerns Inventory to complete at home along with a cover letter giving date due and a stamped envelope in which to return the inventory. To guarantee that the data would not be biased by a change in setting, the subjects were also given a list of conditions to follow which would ensure that the assessment procedure for them would be identical to that followed in the onsite testing.

## Instrument

The Adult career Concerns Inventory is an inventory appropriate to assess career concerns of adults of any age and occupation. Focused on the planfulness and exploration factors of Super's theoretical model of vocational maturity (Super et al., 1988), it assesses exploration, establishment, maintenance, disengagement, and career change.

Subjects responded to 65 statements reflecting career concerns at these stages by rating each statement as being of no

concern (a), little concern (2), some concern (3, considerable concern (4), great concern (5) to them at the time. Sample items are:

"Finding a line of work that really interests me."

(Exploration--Items 1-15)

"Developing a reputation in my life of work."

(Establishment--Items 16-30)

"Getting refresher training so as to keep up."

(Maintenance--Items 31-45)

"Planning well for retirement."

(Disengagement--Items 46-60)

"Clarifying my thinking about whether or not to make a career change."

(Career Change--Items 61-65)

Ratings given to the items comprising the respective stages were summed, and an average item rating was calculated as the resulting score for each stage. The Adult Career Concerns Inventory can be administered in 15 to 30 minutes, self-scored, and easily interpreted.

Internal consistency coefficients (.80s to .90s) have been reported by Super et al. (1988). Alpha coefficients reported by Halpin, Ralph, and Halpin (1987) also support the internal consistency of the five subtests.

Studies of the validity of this instruments have been reported by Mahoney (1987), McCloskey (1986), and Halpin, Ralph, and Halpin (1987).

## Analysis, Results, and Conclusions

Responses to the 65-item Adult Career Concerns Inventory were subjected to an exploratory factor analysis using the common factor analysis approach. The specific procedure was principal axis factoring option from the SPSS-X (SPSS, 1988) software package. Squared multiple correlations were inserted on the diagonal of the correlation matrix as initial communality estimates. Factor selection was based on a combination of Cattell's scree test (1966) and Kaiser's criterion of a minimum eigenvalue of 1 (1960), and Super's initial rational factor selection. Both varimax and oblique rotations were applied to the initial factor matrix with the oblique method being chosen because of the perceived intrinsic interrelatedness of the variables and the more interpretable final solution obtained.

Fourteen of the items making up Super's rationally defined dimension of exploration were clearly loading on the same factor as can be seen in Table 1. Also all five of the items that Super

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Insert Table 1 about here

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

had rationally defined as career change also loaded together on a common factor.

Eleven of the 15 items from Super's original scale of disengagement loaded on a common factor which is still sufficient to maintain factorial identity. However, four of the 15 items from Super's original scale of disengagement failed to load on this factor.

Nine of the 15 items from the original scale of establishment loaded together on a common factor. This number is sufficient to maintain factor identity, but six of the items from the original establishment scale did not load on the common factor.

From the original 15 item scale measuring the dimension of maintenance, nine of the items loaded together on a common factor, and six items loaded on other scales.

For the last factor, six items were extracted with factor loadings greater than .30. This factor is a bothersome one from at least two perspectives. First, four of the six items had meaningful loadings on more than one factor, and second, the items that loaded on this factor come from the original maintenance and establishment scales making this final factor difficult to interpret and best left undefined.

There were some other loadings that were not supportive of Super's original scale construction ideas as can be seen in Table 1. When we utilize factor analysis, we do so with the aim of reducing the measures to a smaller number of homogeneous dimensions which are relatively independent of each other. Such was probably not the case here as can be seen in Table 2. The intercorrelations among the five scales originally

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Insert Table 2 about here

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

defined rationally by Super ranged from .73 to .16 with a median correlation of .38. For the six factors derived from this factor analysis, the intercorrelations ranged from .70 to .10 with a

median correlation of .40. Clearly nothing is gained in terms of scale independence from the factor based solution.

When considering scale internal consistency or homogeneity of the items within each scale, nothing was gained from the factor solution. The coefficient alpha internal consistency estimates ranged from .92 to .95 with a median of .94 for the rationally defined dimensions as reported in Table 2. With the factor solution the coefficient alpha internal consistency estimates ranged from .86 to .95 with a median estimate of .93.

The factor solution clearly replicates the career change and exploration scales rationally identified by Super. Sufficient numbers of items loaded together to support the rational scale identity for the maintenance, establishment, and disengagement, but a number of items loaded differently from the way Super conceptualized. Further, several items--particularly Items 15, 19, 42, and 45--had meaningful loadings on more than one factor, and the magnitude of these loadings were very similar.

Clearly the goals of information reduction, scale independence, and within-scale homogeneity were poorly served by the factor solution. Also, the theoretical interpretability of the scales was reduced as a function of the factor analysis. This investigation is a example of rationally defined scales providing more interpretable information than statistically defined scales based factor analysis as Travers (1951) has maintained.

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Table 1

Factor Analysis of Adult Career Concerns Inventory

| Item | |
|---|---|
| **Exploration** | |
| 1. Clarifying my ideas about the type of work I would really | |
| 2. Deciding what I really want to do for a living. | |
| 3. Finding what line of work I am best suited for. | |
| 4. Learning about kinds of beginning jobs that might be open | |
| 5. Learning what skills are required for jobs I might be int | |
| 6. Choosing among the best occupational alternatives I now s | |
| 7. Choosing the most challenging job among several that inte | |
| 8. Finding a line of work that really interests me. | |
| 9. Making sure of my current occupational choice. | |
| 10. Choosing a job that will really be satisfying for me. | |
| 11. Getting started in my chosen occupational field. | |
| 12. Deciding how to qualify for the work I now want to do. | |
| 13. Meeting people who can help me get started in my chosen f | |
| 14. Finding opportunity to do the kind of work I really like. | |
| 15. Making specific plans to achieve my current career goals. | |

| | Factor | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| like to do. | .08 | -.07 | .15 | .64 | -.09 | .03 |
| | .01 | -.07 | .10 | .73 | .01 | .03 |
| | -.10 | -.05 | .07 | .85 | .01 | .06 |
| to me. | -.11 | -.06 | .03 | .75 | .09 | -.05 |
| erested in. | -.05 | .00 | .08 | .70 | .14 | -.17 |
| ee. | .17 | .12 | .06 | .61 | .20 | -.10 |
| rest me. | .26 | -.02 | -.12 | .55 | .12 | -.13 |
| | .02 | .06 | .04 | .76 | -.09 | -.04 |
| | .22 | .03 | -.03 | .63 | -.11 | -.06 |
| | .06 | .04 | .12 | .76 | -.03 | -.05 |
| | -.17 | .03 | -.07 | .82 | -.08 | .14 |
| | .04 | -.03 | -.05 | .78 | -.02 | .16 |
| ield. | -.11 | -.01 | .11 | .77 | .09 | .14 |
| | -.11 | .00 | .11 | .82 | -.02 | .07 |
| | .33 | .05 | .03 | .43 | .09 | .04 |

Table 1 continued

| Item |
| --- |
| Establishment |
| 16. Settling down in a job, business, or practice I can really |
| 17. Making a place for myself in the organization or setting I |
| 18. Doing things that will help me stay in the field in which |
| 19. Achieving stability in my occupation. |
| 20. Getting established in my occupation, business, organizati |
| 21. Consolidating the position I have now made for myself. |
| 22. Developing a reputation in my line of work. |
| 23. Becoming a dependable producer. |
| 24. Becoming especially knowledgeable or skillful in my work. |
| 25. Winning the support of my employer, colleagues, or clients |
| 26. Planning how to get ahead in my established field of work. |
| 27. Improving my chances of advancement in my current occupati |
| 28. Doing the things that make people want me in my work. |
| 29. Finding ways of making my competence known. |
| 30. Advancing to a more responsible position. |

| | Factor | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| stay with. | .30 | .06 | -.01 | .62 | -.06 | .02 |
| work in. | .67 | .01 | -.02 | .30 | .00 | -.11 |
| I have started. | .66 | .12 | .03 | .07 | .06 | -.10 |
| | .41 | .11 | -.10 | .46 | .07 | .11 |
| on or practice. | .27 | .04 | .04 | .43 | -.10 | .29 |
| | .43 | .15 | -.20 | .18 | .07 | .15 |
| | .52 | .10 | -.12 | .23 | .00 | .27 |
| | .16 | .20 | -.04 | .33 | .01 | .54 |
| | .04 | .06 | .05 | .14 | .13 | .76 |
| . | .37 | .09 | -.01 | .04 | .18 | .52 |
| | .71 | -.02 | .25 | .01 | .00 | .19 |
| on. | .86 | -.07 | .13 | -.15 | .07 | -.06 |
| | .78 | .02 | .01 | .09 | .10 | .07 |
| | .80 | .04 | .15 | -.09 | .06 | .14 |
| | .57 | -.01 | .26 | .00 | .14 | -.01 |

Table 1 continued

| Item |
| --- |
| **Maintenance** |
| 31. Maintaining the occupational position I have achieved. |
| 32. Holding my own against the competition of new people enter |
| 33. Adapting to changes introduced since I got established in |
| 34. Keeping in turn with the people I work with. |
| 35. Keeping the respect of people in my field. |
| 36. Keeping up with new knowledge, equipment, and methods in m |
| 37. Attending meetings and seminars on new methods. |
| 38. Visiting places where new developments can be seen. |
| 39. Getting to know important people in my occupation or field |
| 40. Getting refresher training so as to keep up. |
| 41. Identifying new problems to work on. |
| 42. Finding out about new opportunities as my field changes. |
| 43. Deciding what new fields to open up or develop. |
| 44. Developing new skills to cope with changes in my field. |
| 45. Developing new knowledge or skills to help me improve in m |

| | Factor 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | .42 | .20 | -.36 | .09 | .20 | .00 |
| ing the field. | .34 | .22 | -.28 | .13 | .18 | .13 |
| my occupation. | .15 | .15 | -.30 | .21 | .36 | .10 |
| | .13 | .12 | -.22 | .25 | .18 | .27 |
| | .15 | .19 | -.04 | .18 | .18 | .51 |
| y field. | .19 | .01 | -.07 | -.01 | .53 | .32 |
| | .26 | .09 | -.09 | -.05 | .57 | .21 |
| | .17 | .12 | -.14 | .00 | .69 | .01 |
| . | .29 | .04 | .03 | -.01 | .55 | .23 |
| | .11 | .18 | -.15 | .12 | .48 | .21 |
| | .22 | -.08 | -.05 | .10 | .56 | .30 |
| | .35 | -.14 | -.02 | .23 | .36 | .13 |
| | -.18 | -.01 | .15 | .23 | .37 | .51 |
| | .06 | -.08 | .09 | .00 | .62 | .45 |
| y work. | .16 | .00 | .01 | -.06 | .48 | .58 |

Table 1 continued

| Item |
| --- |
| Disengagement |
| 46. Developing easier ways of doing my work. |
| 47. Concentrating on things I can do as I get older. |
| 48. Cutting down on my working hours. |
| 49. Avoiding occupational pressures I formerly handled more e |
| 50. Developing more hobbies to supplement work interests. |
| 51. Finding out what activities. |
| 52. Planning well for retirement. |
| 53. Making sure I can have a good life when I retire. |
| 54. Talking to retired friends about retirement and adjustmen |
| 55. Setting aside enough assets for retirement. |
| 56. Having a good place to live in retirement. |
| 57. Having a good life in retirement. |
| 58. Having friends I can enjoy in retirement. |
| 59. Making good use of the free time that comes with retireme |
| 60. Doing things I've always wanted to do but never had time |
| Career Change |
| 61. Clarifying my thinking about whether or not to make a car |
| 62. Choosing a suitable field to change to. |
| 63. Getting a job in the field I am changing to. |
| 64. Settling down in the work to which I have changed. |
| 65. Making secure my place in my changing career. |

| | Factor 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | .16 | .05 | -.02 | .01 | .35 | .13 |
| | -.06 | .50 | -.03 | -.11 | .30 | .07 |
| | -.05 | .13 | .16 | .07 | .25 | -.22 |
| easily. | .09 | .06 | .12 | .16 | .41 | -.27 |
| | .00 | .29 | .11 | .05 | .35 | -.31 |
| | -.20 | .61 | .01 | -.02 | .32 | -.38 |
| | .06 | .86 | .09 | -.09 | -.15 | -.01 |
| | .05 | .89 | .04 | -.01 | -.10 | .09 |
| nts. | -.14 | .64 | .03 | -.07 | .31 | .25 |
| | .17 | .82 | .03 | -.16 | -.13 | .12 |
| | .06 | .90 | .00 | .01 | -.09 | .14 |
| | .02 | .91 | .01 | .07 | -.14 | .10 |
| | -.04 | .84 | .03 | .01 | -.03 | .00 |
| ent. | -.11 | .80 | .01 | .04 | .07 | -.09 |
| for. | .03 | .62 | .11 | .10 | .16 | -.07 |
| | | | | | | |
| reer change. | .12 | .10 | .62 | .35 | .18 | -.14 |
| | .06 | .15 | .78 | .22 | .08 | -.04 |
| | .01 | .06 | .80 | .21 | .06 | -.04 |
| | .13 | .08 | .82 | .06 | -.09 | .10 |
| | .19 | .11 | .74 | .03 | -.11 | .19 |

Table 2

Coefficient Alpha Internal Consistency Reliability Coefficients for the Scales and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients Among the Scales

| Factor | | Reliability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exploration | (1) | .95 | | .60 | .46 | .16 | .49 | .50 | .11 | .49 | .99 | .40 | .49 |
| Establishment | (2) | .94 | | | .73 | .28 | .35 | .94 | .23 | .35 | .64 | .62 | .80 |
| Maintenance | (3) | .93 | | | | .40 | .17 | .75 | .35 | .17 | .46 | .87 | .82 |
| Disengagement | (4) | .92 | | | | | .35 | .33 | .97 | .35 | .15 | .55 | .27 |
| Career change | (5) | .94 | | | | | | .31 | .29 | 1.00 | .49 | .28 | .19 |
| Establishment factor | (6) | .95 | | | | | | | .28 | .31 | .52 | .64 | .70 |
| Disengagement factor | (7) | .92 | | | | | | | | .29 | .10 | .43 | .24 |
| Career change factor | (8) | .86 | | | | | | | | | .49 | .28 | .19 |
| Exploration factor | (9) | .94 | | | | | | | | | | .40 | .50 |
| Maintenance factor | (10) | .94 | | | | | | | | | | | .64 |
| Undefined factor | (11) | .90 | | | | | | | | | | | |